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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Tuesday, June 3, 2003

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# Michigan Driver Responsibility Program Legislation Passes Senate

*1 in 6 Traffic Deaths in Michigan Caused by 'Bad Driver'*

(LANSING) – Michigan's habitually bad drivers will have to pay higher fees to keep their driving privileges and to compensate for the danger they create on state roads under legislation passed by the Senate today, Senator Jud Gilbert announced.

"Drunk driving, reckless driving and road rage-related incidents have made Michigan's roads and highways more dangerous than ever for our state's law abiding, responsible motorists," Gilbert, R-Algonac, said. "The time has come for us to send a serious message to those drivers who threaten the greater public's safety with their reckless behavior behind the wheel."

According to the "Driver Responsibility Program," a driver who racks up seven or more points in a two-year period will be charged with a \$100 financial assessment, and \$50 for each additional point above seven points.

Additional assessments will be imposed each year for two years for certain individual violations such as killing or injuring a police officer, alcohol/controlled substance related offenses, driving with an expired license and driving without insurance.

A measure was added to the bill on the Senate floor that would allow individuals approaching the seven point threshold a one time opportunity to pass a driver improvement course and have their latest driving offense removed from their point total.

When an individual accrues seven points the Secretary of State will send out a notice. If payment is not received within 30 days after the notice is sent, the Secretary of State will send a second notice to inform the individual that payment must be received within the next 30 days, or the individual's license will be suspended.

"With Michigan's roads and highways busier than ever, we need to do something further to get the attention of drivers with the worst driving records," Gilbert said. "Our message is: if you habitually ignore traffic safety laws, it is going to cost you."

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A similar program has been successfully implemented in New Jersey, with other states such as Texas, Rhode Island, Ohio, California, Florida and Pennsylvania considering similar legislation. Although New Jersey is one of the 10 most populous states in the nation, it has the lowest number of fatalities per mile driven. According to the state's transportation officials, New Jersey has reported a 24 percent decline in driving-related fatalities thanks to the program.

Gilbert said the legislation is another incentive for people to drive safer. A recent *Detroit News* article revealed one in six traffic deaths in Michigan involve a driver with multiple traffic violations. The same report also revealed, according to data provided by the National Highway Safety Administration, that between 1994 and 2001 Michigan ranked fourth in the nation in the percentage of crash deaths involving drivers with bad records.

Senate Bill 509 now awaits consideration from the House Appropriations Committee.

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**Editor's Note: Downloadable comments from Senator Gilbert on the Driver Responsibility legislation are available on the Senate Majority Audiowire at:  
<http://www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/audiowire/index.htm>**